

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: Mule Deer
Region: 5
Hunting District: 575-00
Year: 2019

1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).

CWD was detected in the far eastern portion of this hunting district in 2018 and in adjacent HD 502 during the 2017 hunting season. Long term CWD management, as described in the Montana CWD Management Plan, is aimed at maintaining low densities of deer in hunting districts with CWD and adjacent hunting districts. The following season proposals are designed to meet that objective for HD 575.

This proposal increases the number of mule deer B licenses (575-00) from 250 to 500

Change From:

575-00: 250 B Licenses.

Sept 07 – Oct 20 Antlerless Mule Deer. Archery Season Only

Oct 26 – Dec 01 Antlerless Mule Deer

Change To:

575-00: 500 B Licenses.

Sept 07 – Oct 20 Antlerless Mule Deer. Archery Season Only

Oct 26 – Dec 01 Antlerless Mule Deer

This proposal also increases the 575-00 quota range from 5-200 to 5-750.

Table 1. Hunter and harvest statistics for mule deer B license holders for H.D. 575, 2007 – 2018.

Year	Season Type	B License Number	Harvest		B License Harvest
			Bucks	Antlerless	Antlerless
2007	Either Sex	750	825	651	415
2008	Either Sex	750	937	633	425
2009	Either Sex	750	856	687	442
2010	Either Sex	500	696	464	264
2011	Either Sex	250	639	325	114
2012	Either Sex	50	651	53	10
2013	Antlered Buck	50	666	52	20
2014	Antlered Buck	0	623	9	0
2015	Antlered Buck	0	763	6	0
2016	Antlered Buck	100	862	80	55
2017	Antlered Buck	100	723	95	61
2018	Antlered Buck	250	NA	NA	NA

2. Why is the proposed change necessary?

The eastern portion of HD 575 lies within the Carbon County CWD Positive Zone where mule and white-tailed deer were found to have CWD in 2017. The first detection of CWD in HD 575 occurred in 2018. Implementation of this proposal is necessary to help alleviate some of the developing game damage issues across the hunting district as well as beginning to address the CWD threat. This season proposal is designed to stabilize or slightly reduce the mule deer population especially in the area close to the CWD endemic area. Maintaining lower densities of mule deer is thought to be the best preventative measure to slow the spread of CWD.

3. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.

The objective of the season change is to increase the harvest of antlerless mule deer in this HD by at least 100 animals from the expected harvest level in 2018 and reduce or stabilize the number of deer, especially in the eastern portion of the hunting district.

4. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.

Antlerless mule deer harvest will be monitored through the statewide harvest questionnaire survey. Deer numbers on the Magpie Census Area will be monitored through annual post season and spring helicopter surveys. The number of game damage complaints will also be monitored.

5. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

Mule deer habitat in this western portion of HD 575 was severely damaged by the Derby Fire in 2006 and has not recovered. Mule deer spring counts on the Magpie Census Area are currently running 43% below the long term average and fawn recruitment is consistently poor (Table 2). However, those spring counts may, in part, reflect changes in winter distribution of mule deer as a result of portions of the winter range being destroyed by fire. Post season surveys on the census area since the time of the fire suggest some recovery of the population (Table 3). Those post-season surveys are likely the best reflection of the overall deer numbers across the hunting district.

Table 2. Spring Recruitment Counts on the Magpie Census Area HD 575.

YEAR	ADULTS	FAWNS	UNC.	TOTAL	FAWNS/ 100 ADULTS	Bucks/ 100 Does
1985-86	525	256	542	1323	48	19
1986-87	230	126	900	1256	55	
1987-88	240	159	749	1148	66	3
1988-89	240	139	1155	1534	58	17
1989-90	240	146	1253	1639	61	18
1990-91	240	79	952	1271	33	26
1991-92	240	85	687	1012	35	
1992-93	240	88	781	1109	37	
1993-94	240	112	800	1152	47	9
1994-95	240	94	695	1029	39	10
1995-96	240	50	853	1143	21	22
1996-97	240	29	504	773	12	8
1997-98	240	79	644	963	33	2
1998-99	775	476		1251	61	23
1999-00	834	514		1348	62	
2000-01	935	477		1412	51	
2001-02	918	420		1338	46	24
2002-03	1039	342		1381	33	
2003-04	761	163		924	21	9
2004-05	707	163		870	23	6
2005-06	687	158		845	23	16
2006-07	654	143	63	860	22	
2007-08	592	99	65	756	17	25
2008-09	568	112	124	804	20	15
2009-10	588	99		687	17	5
2010-11	564	89	55	708	16	21
2011-12	400	112	52	564	28	21
2012-13	395	144		520	36	23
2013-14	418	117	110	645	28	24
2014-15	462	133	47	589	29	24
2015-16	490	127		617	26	27
2016-17	350	112	56	518	32	11
2017-18	420	90	75	585	22	17

Table 3. Post-season classification of mule deer on the Magpie census area, 1978-2018.

Month	Year	Bucks	Does	Unc Ad	Ad	D/A	Total	Fawns/ 100 Does	Fawns/ 100 Ad	Incr- ment	Bucks/ 100 Does
Dec.- Jan.	2006-07	107	634	-	741	233/233	974	37	31	24	17
	2007-08	104	603	-	707	240/240	947	40	34	25	17
	2008-09	100	508	-	608	155/155	763	31	25	20	20
	2009-10	74	444	-	518	127/127	645	29	24	20	17
	2010-11	117	483	-	600	190/190	790	39	32	24	24
	2011-12	54	298	-	352	150/150	502	50	43	30	18
	2012-13	84	402	-	486	199/199	685	50	41	29	21
	2013-14	72	478	-	550	210/210	760	44	38	28	15
	2014-15	102	450	-	552	258/258	810	57	47	32	23
	2015-16	93	382	-	475	191/191	666	50	40	29	24
	2016-17	100	429	-	529	221/221	750	52	42	29	23
	2017-18	103	481	-	584	220/220	804	46	38	27	21

6. How will this proposal influence this population status?

This proposal will likely hold the population at or below objective in the near term, which is the desired result in the face of the CWD threat.

7. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).

- 1) Utilization transect information: None
- 2) Snow condition survey information:
The winter of 2017-18 was severe resulting in low fawn recruitment and somewhat reduced mule deer populations across HD 575.
- 3) Describe access problems related to change, etc.
Access will generally remain stable with some landowners taking advantage of additional opportunities to manage mule deer on their property.
- 4) Overwinter survival information (i.e. bad winter lost what % of population)
During the severe winter of 2017-18 overwinter fawn mortality was in excess of 50% and adult doe mortality could have been as high as 10%.

8. Provide information relative to impacts to resident hunters, nonresident hunters and public & private land use.

Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

- 1) List specific sports groups or landowners:
This proposal has generally not been discussed with local landowners.
- 2) Indicate if proposal was recommended by public - is it in response to a concern by sportspersons:
The proposal is in response to the hunting season recommendations provided in the CWD management plan.

Submitted by: Shawn T. Stewart

Date: 11/1/2018

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: